

## "Money and Giving, Part 1" - 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 – December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- Today's teaching is part one of a new series I've titled, "Money and Giving."
- Chapters like this is one of the reasons I teach the Bible expositively, book by book, chapter by chapter, and verse by verse.
- This because, it sort of forces me to teach on uncomfortable and even controversial topics such as that of money and giving.

- Actually, both chapters eight and nine are about money and giving, and as such, I believe the Lord has a word for all of us in it.
- Please know in order for me to teach this, I first have to own this, in the sense that it deals with money and giving as a pastor.
- I mention this because it's important that you know that I too give financially to this, God's church, knowing it's God's money.

- Be that as it may, let me hasten to say that I do not know how much you give, and conversely, you don't know how much I give.
- The reason being is we're all prone to view people differently, simply on the basis of how much they give, or even if they give.
- I think of the widow who gave two mites in Luke 21 and how astonished the disciples were when Jesus said she gave the most.

Luke 21:1-4 (NIV) — 1 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3 "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

I like what one commentator said about this widow, "That poor widow's mite was beyond the rich man's magnificence, because it came out of a richer mind."

- Before we jump into our text, we need to know the backstory, as it will be germane to our understanding of what's happening.
- During this time, the early church had experienced tremendous poverty, especially in Jerusalem due chiefly to a severe famine.
- Also, many of the Jews who came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, lost everything, including their jobs and businesses.

- It's for this reason Paul now addresses the offering from the Macedonia and Achaia churches to give to the Jerusalem church.
- It seems Paul wanted the Gentile Christians in that area to have the opportunity to give to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.
- It's with this backstory the text before us today, will come into a sharper focus as we see how these Christians cheerfully gave.

### 1. Giving is a gift (Verse 1)

- v1 Paul, says to them as brothers and sisters that he wants them to know about the grace God gave the Macedonian churches.
- Notice Paul makes mention of the Macedonian churches financial support being that of the grace of God and a gift from God.
- In other words, there are those, to whom God has given the gift of giving and as such God always supplies enough for this gift.

- While there are those who have the gift of giving, that doesn't mean those who don't have that gift don't give financially at all.
- Please know I'm keenly aware of the ongoing debate within the church today, concerning tithing as a New Testament principle.
- Some argue that the Old Testament tithe was under the law, which means that under the New Covenant, no tithe is required.

- Others argue the tithe is pre-law visa-vis the principle of first mention in Genesis where Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek.
- The question becomes, which is it? Is tithing applicable under the New Covenant or is it not applicable because it was the law.
- I'm personally of the belief the 10% as a tithe is the minimum by virtue of the fact that Jesus says it was not to be left undone.

Mat. 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest scripture delineates the tithe as to the church, offerings to missions, and alms to the poor.
- However, if you're giving your tithes to the church, offerings to missions, or alms to the poor grudgingly, then don't give at all.
- The reason I say that is twofold, first, God doesn't need your money and second, God is not honored when you give grudgingly.

2 Corinthians 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

### 2. Giving is a sacrifice (Verses 2-3)

- v2 Paul says of the other churches, while in severe trials, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.
- v3 He then says they gave as much as they could and even beyond their ability, and that they gave entirely of their own volition.
- What Paul is saying here is that it's usually the ones who don't have wealth that give more than those who do have the wealth.

Of this one commentator aptly noted that, "The example of the Macedonians is practical proof that true generosity is not the prerogative of those who enjoy an adequacy of means. The most genuine liberality is frequently displayed by those who have least to give. Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice."

### 3. Giving is a privilege (Verse 4)

- v4 Paul says they actually pleaded with him with an urgency to have the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.
- If you were to ask me why it is that most Christians don't give of their finances, this would have to be one of the main reasons.
- Namely, that they don't see it as a privilege. Perhaps better said, they don't see giving as a get to; they see giving as a got to.

### 4. Giving is God's will (Verse 5)

- v5 Paul of the other churches says they exceeded his expectations giving first to the Lord, then by the will of God also to them.
- To me this speaks very clearly to giving being the will of God such that, it's according to God's Word and God's will for our lives.
- I'll close with a question; "Do I see giving as a gift, involving sacrifice, knowing that it's my privilege to do so as the will of God?"